LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Trade Unions and Rearmament

R. PALME DUTT

A Manifesto Against Colonial War

WILLIAM MORRIS, ELEANOR MARX AVELING and others

July, 1952

One shilling and sixpence

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THE ACTIVE ONES

South African troops returned from the Second World War bringing some good ideas with them; you can't fight fascism without learning a thing or two. When they later came to discuss war memorials, one of the ex-servicemen's organisations suggested that the finest memorial to their part in the anti-fascist war would be to raise a fund to establish welfare schemes for their African fellow citizens. And the troops thought well of it. That ex-servicemen's organisation is typical of the kind of body which has now been 'named' under the so-called Suppression of Communism Act, by the Malanazi heirs to Hitler's racial theories. When a distinguished contributor of ours recently visited that country, he found that many people he met referred to *Labour Monthly*. They were people of all kinds and of every community, but they had one distinguishing feature in common; each was among the most active in resisting the Malanazi terror regime in some sphere. Of course *L.M.* readers in South Africa are among these active ones. For the picture of people mentally and physically active is the hallmark of our readers in any country. To take just one example in Britain: Recently a group of readers in Mansfield, Notts., organised a *L.M.* Conference on the subject of National Independence and Peace. I notice that the call was addressed to 'All *active* workers—including branch officials, etc.—in the Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative Movement'. That word again! And that, it seems, was illustrated by the kind of delegates who attended a highly successful conference, presided over by the enterprising Education Secretary of the District Co-operative Society. It is good to hear of initiative like this. Requests for specimen copies are rolling in, as readers send in quite long lists, often with special letters to be enclosed. Among those suggesting prospective readers, I notice, are some who were themselves introduced to the magazine in this way only a short time ago; and frequently a 'prospect' writes especially thanking us and the proposer, for introducing them to 'a most excellent magazine'; or 'Very glad to be introduced to it'; or 'I am already a reader, but I have passed it on to a friend—wish I had thought of doing so before'.

FROM THEIR PRISON

Links between our readers cover many years, and also great distances. Here's a special example: A Yorkshire reader, with a lifetime of activity in the trade union and labour movement wrote sadly to say that 'It is with very great reluctance,' following a serious illness, that he could no longer find the wherewithal to pay his subscription. 'This is a severe blow to me after being a regular and appreciative reader of *L.M.* from its first copy. There is no telling the help and enlightenment I have received from reading it. Even when I have disagreed with the views of some of its contributors, I have benefited by the vigour, lucidity and sincerity with which they expressed themselves'. By the same post came a letter from a semi-colonial country. It was from a prisoner in one of the penal island concentration camps which multiply wherever imperialism's fist is felt. He and his comrades shared a subscription between them. He writes: 'It is

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Notes of the Month

Trade Unions and Rearmament

It is this profit which curses all modern society and prevents any noble enterprise, while it compels us (even the peaceable Gladstone) to market wars which bring forth 'murders great and grim'.

(WILLIAM MORRIS, letter to William Allingham, November 26, 1884).

SEVENTY years ago, on July 4, 1882, the guns of the Liberal Premier, Gladstone, bombarded Alexandria, and ushered in the new era of feverish imperialist expansion which succeeded to the declining world industrial monopoly of Britain. In commemoration of this landmark—not less significant today, when British troops are still concentrated in the Canal Zone and the Sudan, and murderous imperialist wars of aggression are being

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waged in Malaya and Korea—we republish this month, for the first time since its original publication, what is probably the first anti-imperialist manifesto of modern British Socialism, directed against the war in the Sudan in 1885, with the honoured signatures of William Morris, Eleanor Marx Aveling, and others. This document of the true beginnings of the modern political labour movement in Britain is especially appropriate and worthy of study today when the monster of imperialist aggression, barbarous colonial wars and crippling armaments has reached a height which Gladstone could never have guessed, and is dragging Britain down to economic ruin. It is the more appropriate when at this moment the Labour Party Executive has published a declaration on 'Labour's Foreign Policy' to glorify Atlantic rearmament and the wars in Malaya and Korea; and the Trades Union Congress General Council has put out a document on 'The Trade Unions and Rearmament,' which argues that the countries of imperialism must have 'strength' to impose their will, and that armaments expenditure provides employment for the workers.

A passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to hell.

'Robbery and Violence'

In order to establish the more firmly this true outlook of the founders of British Socialism *(not* the Fabian latecomers, who were at this time barely emerging from the swaddling clothes and 'drawing room obscurity' of their 'New Life Fellowship' origins—but the real socialist movement), let us quote the resolution which was adopted at 'a well attended gathering at South Place Institute' on April 23, 1885, and reported in the *Commonweal* of May, 1885:

> That this meeting denounces the aggression on the peoples of Egypt and the Sudan which have occasioned such wrong, waste and slaughter, and sympathises heartily with the brave men, women and children who have offered such dauntless resistance to tyranny. It considers all this robbery and violence to be only the necessary outcome of the system of commercial exploitation, which in one way or another curses all the countries of the world, and it calls on all workers to resist such a policy to the utmost, and to combine for the final removal of the causes which produce it.

William Morris was in the chair. John Burns spoke in support The resolution was carried with one dissentient. 'An amendment

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denouncing the Arabs as merciless and lawless' (who said 'bandits'?) 'found no seconder'. Study this resolution well, dear Mr. Attlee and Mr. Morrison, Sir Vincent Tewson and Mr. Deakin —for have you not all loved to tell us that you find the 'inspiration' of your 'socialism' in William Morris, not in Marx?

'Commercial Patriotism'

Another resolution was adopted at the same meeting. This resolution is also well worth reproduction for very living current guidance:

> That this meeting recognises in the endeavour to impose upon the English people an 'imperial' policy an attempt on the part of the ruling classes to get rid of the most glaring outgrowth of the commercial system, by planting its victims in the soil of unexploited regions and of colonies already in the grasp of capitalism, in order to extend the area and prolong the existence of this system so fruitful of slavery and degradation to the workers. Furthermore, that this policy of commercial patriotism, if persistently pursued, must inevitably entangle the Government of this country with the contending Governments of other countries, to result in war and bloodshed, the burden of which will have to be borne by the working classes of the world who have neither wish nor cause for quarrel among themselves.

This resolution was seconded by Eleanor Marx Aveling, and supported, among others, by H. H. Champion. Some of this resolution may be commended to the special attention of Mr. Shinwell, who is trying to revive the ancient flyblown nostrum of 'emigration' (shades of Ireland!) as the 'solution' for the problems of British capitalist decay. All of it may be commended to the attention of the present imperialist leaders of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress, with its true warning that imperialist policy 'must inevitably entangle the Government of this country with the contending governments of other countries to result in war and bloodshed, the burden of which will have to be borne by the working classes of the world'. The justice of this prediction has been demonstrated in two world wars. Yet these present leaders, ignoble successors of the pioneers whose efforts alone have made their position possible, are now preparing hotfoot for a third world war—this time against socialism.

Warning Voices

Blind to the signs of the times in which we live, and incapable of learning from the warnings of the socialist pioneers of three quarters of a century ago, these architects of disaster for the working class cling to the imperialist heritage, seek to maintain

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its rule with bloody colonial wars, and for these ends demand the ever more reckless multiplication of armaments at the expense of impoverishment of the people. The old Chartist, Ernest Jones —who truly said of the Empire 'On its colonies the sun never sets, but the blood never dries'—gave warning a century ago of its future decay and of the problems which this would bring for the people:

> That grandeur is decaying; its colonies will fall off. . . . Its commerce will die because it is unsound at the core. . . .
>
> England has been made a pensioner of other lands for daily bread. We can command it still, but the hour of weakness may come: then when we ask the nations for a loaf, they may remember that we gave them cannon balls, and pay us back in kind. . . .
>
> While we have been extending ourselves abroad we have been undermining ourselves at home.

Even the Liberal imperialist Gladstone, who boasted that 'the sentiment of Empire is innate in every Briton; it is part of our patrimony, born with our birth and dying only with our death', had anxious presages of the future:

> The strength of England lies in England, not in the icebound deserts of North America or the impenetrable wastes of Australia, not in the extremities but in the heart which propels the blood through all these regions and the brain which binds them as one. But the burden is becoming almost too great to bear. The Empire is not well governed, and under the mild sway of Britain abuses may prevail such as should raise a blush on the cheek of every despot in the world.

But that was an old Liberal imperialist speaking. It has been left for the modern breed of Labour imperialists to bless the head-hunting and razing of villages in Malaya or the horrors of Korea—and then to turn on and rebuke their own followers, the trade unionists and socialists of Britain, for failure to support these outrages or unwillingness to supply the weapons of destruction for such ends.

Ichabod Churchill

With sharper premonition of impending catastrophe than the mayflies of Labour imperialism, the old Conservative imperialist, Churchill, has sounded again the note of doom which echoed through his 'terrible twentieth century' speech on the death of George VI. Speaking on the economic situation on June 11 he declared that 'it is an alert that I am sounding, but it is more than an alert—it is an alarm', and he compared Britain's position to the days of the blitz. His immediate objective was clear: to cover up responsibility for the further deterioration and weaken-

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ing of the pound which all Butler's window-dressing next day could not conceal, and to strengthen the ground for the fight against the wage demands of the workers, and for the further burdens and impositions which the imperialist war policy is going to lay upon the people. But through all his utterance reverberated the sense of the ominous cracking and crumbling of the imperialist foundation on which the entire social-political structure of present-day Britain is built, including the short-lived blissful Siamese-twin co-existence of Conservative and Labour imperialism and their mockery of a 'welfare state' of austerity and worsening standards. 'In all history there has never been a community so large, so complex, poised at such a dizzy eminence and on so precarious a foundation'. He found 'the traditions and triumphs of a thousand years challenged by the ebb and flow of markets and commercial transactions in the vast swaying world which has sprung up'. 'We have never been beaten yet'. 'All that we have achieved and all that we possess and all our glories might quite rapidly become nothing'. The sense of the doom of his order is closing in upon him. But why should the labour movement go down with this doom?

Path of Death

The choice between two paths has opened before the labour movement and the people of this country. One is to go down with the sinking ship of the old imperialist order; to bleed the people white for more and more arms and more and more troops in order to quell the revolt of the peoples all over the world: to line up as an obedient satellite in the armed camp of the new masters of world capitalism, alongside everything that is stinking and rotten from end to end of the world, the dying feudal lords and princes and despots, from the Syngman Rhees and the Marshal Songrams to the Greek butchers and neo-nazism, against every advance of socialism and liberation; and to hand over the country tied and bound to the warlords of the New Axis as a military base marked 'for destruction'. That is one path—the path of death, of suicide, of the final outcome of the betrayal of socialism.

Path of Life

The other path is to break free; to end the wars of aggression and invasion of other people's countries and bring the troops home; to repudiate the shameful war alliance for a third world war and return to the basis of the United Nations; to liberate

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the country from subjection to the citadel of world capitalism and resume full independence of determining policy and shaping trade in accordance with the country's needs; to join with the other peoples of the world in the struggle for peace and freedom, for the reduction of armaments and for international economic co-operation; and so to open the way for decisive social and economic change at home, for using Britain's productive resources to meet the urgent needs of the people, for the conquest of the menacing crisis. That is the path of life, of the future, towards which all that is healthy and advancing in the working class movement, among the youth, among the widest sections of the people, is striving. That is the true path of Britain's future. Nothing less than this is involved in the present battle over the rearmament programme.

Voices of Revolt

It is a sign of health that trade union conference after trade union conference during these recent months has gone on record against the rearmament programme, for the ending of the wars in Malaya and Korea, for the prohibition of the atom bomb, chemical and germ warfare, for the all-round reduction of armaments, against the remilitarisation programme in West Germany and Japan, for top-level negotiations and a Five Power Peace Pact. Resolutions critical of the rearmament programme—and, in the majority of cases, also resolutions for one or other or several or all of the above objectives of an integrated alternative policy—have been carried by the recent conferences of the Engineers, the Distributive Workers, the Electricians, the Foundry Workers, the Shipbuilding Draughtsmen, the South Wales Miners, the Plasterers, the Plumbers, the Tobacco Workers, the Co-operative Women's Guild, the Scottish Miners, the Clerical Workers. The viewpoint of the National Union of Railwaymen had already been made clear last year. In the case of the two general unions, on whose massive vote the right wing leadership counts for its main support, the lack of adequate facilities for the democratic consultation of the wishes of the members on this issue means that the vote cast by their officials in their name may not represent a real decision of the membership. Even where, in the major conferences of the co-operative movement, the official right wing platform was still able to carry the day, at the Co-operative Party Congress three and one third

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millions, and at the Co-operative Union Congress four and a half millions registered their opposition to the rearmament programme.

His Master's Orders

No wonder *The Times* editorial of May 10 sounded the alarm of the ruling class against this warning signal of the democratic expression of the workers.

> The implications are deeply disturbing. If the simple issue of whether the present expenditure on arms is too much or not were allowed to come before the annual conference of the Labour Party at the end of September it is quite likely that the present official policy would be defeated. . . . The difference between the position now and the position a year ago is not so much that opinion has changed as that it has been released.

Chain up the monster Demos; despite all the precautions of an obsequious leadership, and a gerrymandered electoral system, it has got 'released'. So the stern orders went out from on high to get the monster back under control. In France, where the workers directly follow Communist leadership, and have resisted all the pressure to change their allegiance, the method of the American war camp has been the method of open violence, of the police assault and the baton charge, of the imprisonment of the leaders and 'conspiracy' prosecution—the familiar methods of 1939 that preceded and prepared the Vichy betrayal of France. In Britain, where the right wing leadership still controls the upper machinery of the movement, the offensive is entrusted to them to conduct from within.

Opening the Offensive

The historic oldest common organisation of the workers, the London Trades Council, with a record of national leadership before ever the Trades Union Congress existed, is threatened with orders for disbandment ('deregistration'), without charge or hearing by the General Council of the T.U.C. against the declared united will of its membership of six hundred and fifty-eight thousand (a vote of 535 to none at its delegate conference on June 6 against the arbitrary and disruptive decision of the General Council). The Labour Party Executive issues a 'discussion pamphlet' on 'Problems of Foreign Policy' to inculcate all the foulest sophisms of capitalist power politics, and then, without waiting for the results of the 'discussion', issues an official statement on 'Labour's Foreign Policy'. The Trades Union Congress General Council issues a warning memorandum on

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The Trade Unions and Rearmament' 'to make quite clear the position of the Trade Union Movement on this matter'—in opposition to the democratic decisions of the overwhelming majority of trade union conferences which have been held in recent months and registered their votes 'on this matter.'

'Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful Servant'

With benignant satisfaction the ruling class notes the obedience of its servants. The Labour Party's foreign policy pamphlet is patronisingly adjudged 'a worthy and responsible document' (*Observer,* June 15). But the Trades Union Congress declaration arouses transports of delight:

> Last week's T.U.C. statement on rearmament is worthy of a body which has undoubtedly become one of the great Estates of the Realm, carrying a large measure of power and responsibility independently of which party provides the Government of the day. . . . The Labour Party may be in Government one day and in Opposition the next, while the T.U.C. remains an immovable part of British Government at all times.
>
> (*Observer,* June 1, 1952).

'Immovable'? Sweet and consoling word to an anxious ruling class. 'Part of British Government at all times'—including of a Tory Government. Such is the cynical current fashionable theory of the ruling class and its servants in the Trade Union leadership, which seeks to convert the trade unions from fighting organisations of the working class into docile regulating machinery of the capitalist state, independent of the character of the government in power. This is a theory which has much in common with the 'corporate state' conception of fascism. It has nothing in common with democracy or the traditions of trade unionism. Suppose the membership of the unions desire an independent role? Suppose eight million trade unionists do not wish to be 'part of' a Tory Government? Suppose the 'irresistible force' of the working class comes up against the 'immovable' object of the right wing leadership? What then, gentlemen? The class struggle is not so easily exorcised. The battle against the right wing policy, against the rearmament programme, American domination and co-operation with Toryism, is also the battle for the freedom of trade unionism.

'Democratic' Discussion

The Labour Party Executive adopted its own peculiar method of dealing with the revolt in the constituency labour parties. At the end of April it published a 'discussion pamphlet' on foreign

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policy which contained all the familiar claptrap of the Foreign Office to initiate innocent socialists into the mysteries of the Atlantic war camp's *realpolitik*, with suitable fawning on the United States bankers and generals and anti-Soviet venom ('the idea that there is any essential difference between socialism and capitalism makes no appearance at all in the pamphlet from end to end; it is evidently regarded as having nothing to do with foreign policy'—G. D. H. Cole). The purpose of this 'discussion pamphlet' was stated to be

> To assist all sections of the Movement to play their full part in the making of policy. . . .It is hoped that all affiliated organisations, trade unions as well as constituency and local parties, will not only consider the questions posed in the pamphlet, but will also send their conclusions to the National Executive Committee. . . .
>
> All expressions of view received will be warmly welcomed as useful and essential contributions to the policy discussions now in progress at the national level.

Alas for the vanity of human hopes! By the end of May, before the affiliated organisations could have any chance of going through the routine of fixing the necessary meetings for discussion and sending their conclusions 'to play their full part in the making of policy', the executive adopted its official declaration on 'Labour's Foreign Policy', published in June. The *New Statesman and Nation* Diary of June 7 ruefully commented:

> Conscientious party members who have been arranging discussion groups up and down the country in accordance with this advice must be disheartened. . . . I cannot believe that this curious piece of timing was deliberately designed to frustrate the expression of rank and file opinion.

Perish the thought.

Turning the Blind Eye

The General Council of the Trades Union Congress had a stiffer job; for they had to deal with the trade unions which, unlike constituency parties, are sovereign bodies, and not creatures to be created or disbanded by the will of the master; and which also, unlike the unhappy constituency parties, have the right to meet in democratically elected national conferences and debate policy and reach their decisions before the Annual Conference of the Labour Party. The General Council's memorandum accordingly, in contrast to the Labour Party's dreary repetition of Foreign Office platitudes, has to begin with

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the fact of criticism. But this is as near as it gets to the real world. Professing to summarise and classify the various schools of criticism of the rearmament programme, it coolly omits the main criticism which was sounded at every trade union conference. Everyone knows that the main criticism was that the *policy* behind the rearmament programme is not defensive, but aggressive; that it is bound up with indefensible colonial wars and the revival of nazism and fascism; that it is an American-dominated policy openly directed to a third world war against socialism; that it is ruining Britain economically today and preparing the military destruction of Britain as an American atomic base tomorrow. Every trade union and co-operative delegate is aware of this line of criticism, which was the *centre* of heated debates. But not the General Council. They try to pretend never to have heard of it—presumably because it would be difficult to answer. Nelson set the example of turning a blind eye. But at least he turned a blind eye in order to hit the target. The General Council turns a blind eye in order to miss the target.

Critics of Rearmament

The General Council discovers three schools of critics of the rearmament programme. The first are declared to be those who regard all armaments as 'a luxury' to be 'discarded at will'. This is presumably a reference to pure pacifists. There was no expression of pure pacifism at the trade union conferences. The second are declared to be those whose 'first loyalty exists outside this country.' This might at first be supposed to be a welcome piece of self-criticism of the General Council for its support of the American military occupation and domination of this country as a satellite of Washington. But since the General Council has never once in its entire recorded history been guilty of self-criticism, the reference must be presumed to be intended for those who fight for the national independence of this country from foreign military occupation and domination. The third group is declared to be those who, while accepting the 'necessity' of rearmament, endeavour to give 'priority' to home social and economic needs. This is presumably intended as a reference to the Bevan-Crossman section of the Labour Party leadership, who while accepting the policy of the rearmament programme, Atlantic alliance, etc., advocate its reduction by 5 per cent (£250 million on £5,200 million). This very dim and watered down reflection

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of the rank-and-file criticism of the rearmament programme does at least exist among a section of the leadership, and was expressed, for example, by the Executive of the Distributive Workers, who have issued a criticism of the General Council statement along these lines. But an examination of the proceedings and resolutions of the trade union conferences would show that this represented a relatively minor section, and that the main body of resolutions demanded a radical change in the *policy* behind the rearmament programme, a Five Power Pact, etc. The General Council should have studied the actual resolutions of the trade union conferences before attempting its reply.

'Peace' Where There is no Peace

Comfortably ignoring the real criticism of the imperialist war policy, the General Council blandly asserts as a self-evident truism not requiring demonstration that the object of the American War Alliance is peace and not war ('the people of the free democracies are wholly intent upon the preservation of peace'), and that the purpose of the colossal building-up of an overwhelming preponderance of armaments is merely to 'negotiate from strength', i.e. mailed-fist diplomacy. This was also Hitler's defence of his rearmament. The attempt of a military coalition—illegal by the Charter of the United Nations—to impose its will on the world by force of superior armaments, is not a policy of peace but an open recipe for war. The hypocritical pretence of the aim of peace on this basis—which could not take in the most innocent of sheep—is openly built on the assumption of the capitulation of the other nations to the threat of superior armed power without a struggle. In this sense only—in the same sense in which Hitler declared his aim to be 'peace'—is the aim of the Atlantic Pact 'peace.' The real aim is war; and the more outspoken American generals and politicians have made no bones about proclaiming it. Indeed, their main complaint is their openly expressed fear that the striving of the Soviet Union for peace may defeat their war aims:

> The possiblity of a temporary truce haunts United States policy planners. (*Business Week*, April 12, 1952).
>
> The foreign policies of this country, Britain and France, have now entered a truly agonising crisis. The cause is the so-called peace offensive now being carried on by the masters of the Kremlin. (*Washington Post*, April 16, 1952).

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Sudden peace would shake United States war-geared economy. (*New York Herald Tribune*, April 7, 1952).

They fear peace.

Aggression for 'Defence'

There can be no question, declares the General Council, of armament for its own sake or for making war by the Western nations upon any other nation or group of nations. Tell that to the Koreans. Or the Malayans. Or the Vietnamese. Or any of the nations against whom the Western powers are at this moment making war and invading their countries and devastating their homes amid pious professions of 'peace' and blessings on the aggressors' arms by the General Council. Listen to the signed letter of 6,223 Korean People's Army prisoners on Koje Island, smuggled out on May 23 and published in *Mindu Chosen*, organ of the National Assembly of Korea:

> Death awaits us at any time. Our comrades are being sacrificed daily. Fully-armed U.S. military guards torment us indiscriminately. They drag out our comrades and murder them with machine guns or carbines, either publicly or secretly. They herd hundreds of our comrades to torture chambers. Patriots are pushed in batches by these beasts into steel-shuttered trucks or covered police lorries and shot on the shore, their dead bodies being thrown into the sea . . .
>
> On May 19 the American gangsters played a most filthy trick in No. 66 compound. They announced that POWs who wished to return to North Korea must get ready to travel by ship by 7 p.m. that evening, and await orders in their own tents. Naturally all of us wanted to go home without exception. We then lined up waiting to set out, when the American soldiers suddenly opened up with machine-guns and flame throwers. They even mobilised tanks to attack us; 127 of our comrades were killed on the spot and many others were wounded . . .
>
> Boatner, commander of the American POW camp, has arrogantly declared that he will extort a heavy price for the Dodd and Colson incident. No one can match the U.S. butchers in barbarity. . . . The American monsters brand insults on our bodies with red hot irons, beat us up with iron bars and whips and even set police dogs upon us. They have tortured us in 'steam rooms', hanged many of us, and even hacked many to pieces . . .
>
> They are retaliating because we have asked them to observe the Geneva Convention and have protested against their inhuman treatment of us, because we have expressed the hope of returning to our own free motherland and have refused to serve the Syngman Rhee gang . .
>
> In any case, no outrage whatever will bring us to our knees.

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Such is the use of armaments for 'defence' and for 'peace' which the General Council asks British trade unionists to approve.

Economic Madness

No less ignominious are the attempted arguments of the General Council on the economic effects of rearmament. In the face of all the evidence of facts, the General Council asserts:

> The country's expenditure on armaments is not the sole or the most significant source of the balance of payments problem . . .
>
> The resources set free by a curtailment of the rearmament programme would not automatically solve the balance of payments problem . . .

The shortest answer to this was provided by the official *Economic Survey for 1951:*

> At best, we face in the immediate future a decline in the rate of increase in the national output, a worsening of the balance of payments, a fall in the supplies of some consumer goods, and a continuing rise in prices.
>
> For this unhappy prospect our own need for rearmament, and the similar needs of our allies in the Western world, are the main and unavoidable cause.

It is notorious that, if we take the period prior to the Korean war, during the five years 1945-50, the net deficit on the balance of payments was £666 million, while the total of government overseas military expenditure was £904 million. Subsequent to the American launching of the offensive in Korea, the booming war expenditure, rearmament and United States stockpiling made itself felt, not only in the direct cost of war expenditure and rearmament, which is all the General Council appears to be capable of seeing, but in the soaring costs of raw materials which sent Britain's import bill in 1951 skyrocketing with an increase of £1,100 million for an increased volume of only 16 per cent (and that increased volume not for increased home consumption), with a resultant deficit on the balance of payments of £521 million. No doubt the General Council would also attempt to argue that the crippling ban on the development of East-West trade, whose expansion could end the dollar deficit and restore the balance of Britain's trade, has nothing to do with the American war policy and was not imposed under American orders. Such wilful blindness to the plain facts of Britain's economic problem is a measure of the irresponsibility to which the General Council has sunk in its subservience to the war policy.

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'War Means Work'?

But the lowest depth is reached with the final argument that rearmament is the means to keep 'unemployment at bay':

> We cannot entirely ignore the industrial and financial difficulties involved in a sharp curtailment of armament production. Widespread unemployment is held at bay today mainly by the rising labour demands of the engineering trades.

So this is the end of the famous programme of 'full employment' under capitalism. Rearm for prosperity! War means work! Long live war! And this shameful hoary, grisly fallacy is trotted out at the very moment when unemployment is steeply rising as a direct consequence of the rearmament programme and the resultant high prices and restriction of consumption. We would not ask the General Council majority to learn a little human decency. That might be asking too much of them. But we would urge them to learn a little elementary economics before they help Britain further down the path of economic ruin.

Trade Unions and the Future

There is an alternative policy for Britain. There is an alternative path to maintain full employment and rising standards. There is an alternative means of solving Britain's deficit on the balance of payments. But that alternative requires the ending of the war policy and the subjection to the American warlords. It requires a policy for peace and the reduction of armaments. It requires the resumption by the trade unions of their true role in the vanguard of the fight for the living standards of their members, for the interests of the people, for peace and national independence and international solidarity, for the defeat of Toryism and the return of a government to carry through the decisive social and economic changes which can alone open a new future for Britain. For these aims all progressive trade unionists are fighting. For these aims the recent conferences of a whole series of trade unions have helped to lead the way. The fight will go forward in the coming Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference, and beyond them. The fight goes forward alike in the economic field and in the political field. At the heart of this fight today is the battle over the rearmament programme and the war policy expressed in the rearmament programme. On the outcome of this battle depends the immediate future of Britain.

June 16, 1952. R.P.D.

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MANIFESTO

Of The Socialist League on The Sudan War

(March 2nd, 1885)

WILLIAM MORRIS and others

[*On the 70th Anniversary of the British occupation of Egpyt (July, 1882), we have pleasure in reprinting what is probably the first anti-imperialist manifesto of the Socialist movement in Britain. Apart from internal evidence as to authorship, it is known that William Morris at this time was responsible for drafting most of the documents of the Socialist League.—Ed. L.M.*]

Fellow Citizens:—

A wicked and unjust war is now being waged by the ruling and propertied classes of this country, with all the resources of civilisation at their back, against an ill-armed and semi-barbarous people whose only crime is that they have risen against a foreign oppression which those classes themselves admit to have been infamous. Tens of millions wrung from the labour of workmen of this country are being squandered on Arab slaughtering; and for what: (1) that Eastern Africa may be 'opened up' to the purveyor of 'shoddy' wares, bad spirits, venereal disease, cheap bibles and the missionary; in short, that the English trader and contractor may establish his dominion on the ruins of the old simple and happy life led by the children of the desert; (2) that a fresh supply of sinecure Government posts may be obtained for the occupation of the younger sons of the official classes; (3) as a minor consideration may be added that a new and happy hunting ground be provided for military sportsmen, who, like the late-lamented Colonel Burnaby, find life boring at home and are always ready for a little Arab shooting when occasion arises. All these ends determine the dominant classes, though in different proportions, to the course they are pursuing.

Citizens, you are the dupes of a plot. Be not deceived by the flimsy pretences that have been, and are, alleged as reasons for the cowardly brigandage perpetrated on weak and uncivilised peoples by these classes in the name of the community. Rest assured the above are the sole motives animating them, whatever their professions; in brief, that, in the words of our manifesto,

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'all the rivalries of nations have been reduced to this one—a degrading struggle for their share of the spoils of barbarous countries to be used at home for the purpose of increasing the riches of the rich and the poverty of the poor'.

With the history and causes of the bondholders' war in Egypt you are probably already sufficiently familiar, but we invite your attention for a moment to the leading facts in this latest development of a career of hypocrisy and crime. After the British conquest of Egypt, General Hicks is allowed to attempt the reconquest of the Sudan in the interest of Egyptian usury. This attempt failing, General Baker is authorised to subdue at least the seaboard. A second failure demonstrating the utter futility of Egyptian arms against the desert spearmen, a fluttering in the dovecotes of the military and the Stock Exchange worlds ensues. But there is balm in Gilead yet. Happy thought, the garrisons—yes, they must be rescued! General Gordon, the successful subduer of rebels in China, and ex-Governor-General at Khartoum, is he not the man to deal with Sudanese malcontents? Assuredly, say the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Times*. Cabinet ministers, unable to resist the mandates of the classes these powerful organs represent, bow their heads and submit.

Gordon, after duly consulting with his friends, is despatched, bearing in his hands the instructions of the Government, but—as events have proved—in his *pocket* those of the distinguished newspapers in question. Arrived at Khartoum, the 'Christian hero', accordingly with scarcely a feint at negotiation, and in defiance of his professions of peace, proceeds to fortify himself within the city, and use it as a base for military raids upon the surrounding tribes, who he had previously cajoled with protestations of friendship. The play after this move was easy. The wicked Mahdi menaces the life of the 'hero'; 'hero' demands an expedition to help him 'smash the Mahdi'. The 'rebels', otherwise Sudanese, are base enough to take their own town of Berber from the Egyptian garrison. 'Christian hero' feels it his bounden duty to announce his intention of recapturing Berber, and putting all its inhabitants to the sword by way of chastisement. (This pious intention, fortunately for the Berberese, remained unrealised.) Meanwhile, garrisons are forgotten. The Jingoes know a cry worth two of that. Gordon abandoned! Despatch your expedition! cry *The Times, Pall Mall Gazette,* and company. Cabinet ministers faintly remonstrate and at length again bow their heads.

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Who are ministers to dispute the orders of influential newspapers representing important interests?

Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs not to make reply;
Theirs but to do and—die,

and dying they are, to all appearances, as Cabinet ministers—of *Pall Mall Gazette*. That, however, is no concern of ours.

The expedition is despatched. British cut-throats slaughter a few thousand Arabs amid the jubilation of the Press, when—oh horror!—Khartoum is fallen: and fallen, too, into the hands of the Sudanese themselves. Gordon, no more! In Fleet Street is there a cry heard; lamentation and weeping and great mourning. Never was the dust of a hero so watered by the gush of newspaper before. Nowadays, however, we produce emotion like other things—primarily for profit—and only secondarily for use. Time was when men poured forth each his own grief in his own manner when they sorrowed for some great departed. Under the rule of the great industry we have changed all this. Now the factory system and the division of labour superseded individual emotion: it is distilled for us by the journalist, and we buy it ready made from the great vats in Fleet Street and Printinghouse Square. The result is that the public sometimes have emotion forced upon them when it suits the purveyor, for other reasons than the greatness of the departed. Perhaps it is so in this case. Anyway, from the well-watered dust of Gordon rises up for the *Times*, *Pall Mall* and their clients, the fair prospect of British Protectorate at Khartoum, railway from Suakim to Berber, new markets, fresh colonial posts, etc. Cabinet ministers once more bow before the all-powerful press, and whispering they will ne'er consent, consent—to the reconquest of the country in the interest of English commerce—for the permanent railway from Suakim to Berber can mean nothing less than this.

Citizens, if you have any sense of justice, any manliness left in you, join us in our protest against the wicked and infamous act of brigandage now being perpetrated for the interest solely of the 'privileged' classes of this country; an act of brigandage led up to through the foulest stream of well planned hypocrisy and fraud that has ever disgraced the foreign policy, even of this commercial age. Mehemet Achmet (The Mahdi) the brave man who, in Oriental fashion, is undertaking the deliverance of his country, has repeatedly declared through his agents his

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willingness to release the Bashi-Bazouk garrison and give guarantees to refrain from aggression in Egypt. Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was in a position, even when the 'Christian hero' was wantonly waging an offensive war against the Mahdi, to ensure the success of the negotiations for his release, as well as that of the garrisons, had he been allowed to make them, as he assuredly would, had this been the real object in view, but such an arrangement was not quite good enough for the market-hunters and filibusters for whom the 'influential' press writes. 'Not this man, but Wolseley', cried they; and Wolseley was sent, avowedly to rescue their nominee—who by that ostentatious pietism which, as they were well aware, gilds everything with a certain section of the British public, had already so well served their turn—but in reality to engage in the conquest of the devoted land upon which from the first their vultures' eyes had been cast.

And, finally, we ask you to consider who it is that have to do the fighting on this and similar occasions. Is it the market-hunting classes themselves? Is it they who form the rank and file of the army? No! but the sons and brothers of the working classes at home. They it is who for a miserable pittance are compelled to serve in these commercial wars. They it is who conquer for the wealthy, middle and upper classes, new lands for exploitation, fresh populations for pillage, as these classes require them, and who have, as their reward, the assurance of their masters that they are 'nobly fighting for their Queen and country'.

The Provisional Council of the Socialist League—

W. Bridges Adams
Edward Aveling
Eleanor Marx Aveling
Robert Banner
E. Belfort Bax
Thomas Binning
H. Charles
William J. Clark
J. Cooper
E. T. Craig
C. J. Faulkner (Oxford)
W. Hudson
Frank Kitz
Joseph Lane
Frederick Lessner
Thomas Maguire (Leeds)
J. L. Mahon
S. Mainwaring
James Mavor (Glasgow)
William Morris
C. Mowbray
Andreas Scheu (Edinburgh)
Edward Watson

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THE CRIME AT BONN

QUÆSTOR

THE signature at Bonn on May 26, of a military alliance between the American-dominated Great Powers and their creation, the Adenauer Government of Western Germany, is one of the greatest crimes against peace ever perpetrated, deliberately and in cold blood, in full knowledge of its consequences. In vain did the *Economist* (May 17) apologise for the Bonn agreements in advance as 'a virtual peace treaty'. If ever an alliance was a virtual war treaty, this is it; and it is indeed a remarkable peace treaty that led one of the best-known Conservative papers of Europe, the Paris *Monde*, to write on the eve of signature (May 25-26):

> It seems that the most immediate consequence of the signature of the Bonn agreements must be the aggravation of international tension and a break between East and West.

What do the Bonn agreements provide?

1. A West German army of 12 divisions, each of 13,000 men, under their own generals: who also are to have 36 per cent of the posts in a 'European General Staff' (*Manchester Guardian*, May 28). The army is to be recruited by conscription for 18 months' service (West German 'shadow Minister of Defence' on May 16). Nominally the divisions are to be kept apart, within a 'European Army': actually there is nothing to prevent their Nazi generals keeping touch with a shadow German General Staff until the time has come to throw off the mask, as Hitler did in 1936. They may be brought together into corps of 40,000 or more if the Americans and the governments sworn to their allegiance so will it. Well might the *Manchester Guardian* head its editorial on May 28: 'A New Wehrmacht'!

2. Allied troops are to remain indefinitely stationed on West German territory, and may be reinforced even without the consent of the Bonn Government. As *The Times* wrote on May 27: 'It brings the "occupation" to an end but provides for the stationing of British, American and French forces in Germany under another name.' That is, the German forces are simply to be—so long as they can be controlled—a weapon in the hands of the American High Command.

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3. The Western Powers retain the right to intervene in German affairs if there is 'subversion of the liberal-democratic basic order', or 'serious disturbance of public order', or a 'grave threat' thereof: and a local commander may do the same if he thinks his forces 'imminently threatened'. The weapon which this represents against strikes, working-class demonstrations and elected governments which the Americans don't like is obvious, particularly if we recall the way in which both British and American occupation authorities brushed aside Acts of the regional German parliaments nationalising industry. The Bonn authorities may appeal against such actions—to the North Atlantic Treaty Powers dominated by the U.S.A.!

4. Under Clause 3, the Bonn Government is bound to take up membership in the 'community of free nations', i.e., the bloc of Western States retaining the capitalist system. It may seek unification with the rest of Germany, but only if the basis is a 'liberal-democratic constitution' (which is the American for the capitalist system), and provided united Germany is 'integrated within the European community' (Clause 3). If this does not happen, the Allies retain their full right of doing what they like with Germany. It is well to recall that, knowing this was being hatched, the British Note to the U.S.S.R. on May 13 had the effrontery to object to Germany being 'denied the basic right of a free and equal nation to associate itself with other nations for peaceful purposes' (because the U.S.S.R. wanted Germany to stand outside any grouping of Powers directed against a peaceful State). *The Times* was more honest when it admitted (May 27) that 'in theory this means that the three Powers could dictate the terms under which Germany is united'. In theory, indeed! Even Adenauer had to plead with the Allies, during the preliminary negotiations, to modify this provision, which showed him as signing away the freedom of his country (*The Times*, May 16): but they were adamant.

5. As though to emphasise the warlike purpose of the agreement, the Bonn Government (whose spokesman has already demanded—as was shown in these columns two months ago—unification of Europe 'up to the Urals', and whose publicity office has lately published a map—reproduced in the *New Central European Observer* on May 24—showing all of Poland west of Germany's 1914 frontier as 'German Eastern territories') declares, together with the Western Powers, that German

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frontiers are not settled and await 'final determination' at some future 'peace settlement' with the U.S.S.R. presumably after revision by war, since in no other way can this be imagined.

After this summary, it is not surprising to find the very mouthpiece of British capitalist monopoly itself involuntarily blurting out the true character of the alliance. Here is the evidence of *The Times:*

> The new arrangements harden that division of Europe which is the most intractable of Europe's troubles. The signature of these treaties is bound to make the reunion of Germany more difficult and more remote. (May 26) . . . No doubt the signature of the new agreements with Western Germany does make German unity much more difficult to achieve in the near future. (May 27) . . . In the months ahead the tension between the two halves of Germany will increase (May 29).

We have already seen the *Monde* saying the same.

Of course humbugs and political tricksters go on asserting that 'the door to negotiations with Russia is not closed', etc. To these, Gerald Bailey, ex-secretary of the National Peace Council and a bitter anti-communist, had already replied in advance when he wrote, on returning from a visit to Germany, that for peaceful unification of Germany:

> The essential concession from the West is clearly the abandonment of the insistence upon Western Germany's membership of the European defence system, which is not as the Western Note appears to claim a contribution to 'a peaceful European community' but a plain military alliance prompted by the cold war and nothing else, and as such manifestly unacceptable to the Russians'.
>
> (*Manchester Guardian*, May 19.)

But the Western Governments obviously don't want the peaceful unification of Germany: and the *Manchester Guardian* hit the bullseye when it wrote, a week later, that the treaty was 'far removed from Versailles; in spirit it is much closer to Locarno'. And what were the Locarno agreements of 1925—if not the bolting and barring of the door to German aggression westwards (in fancy), while leaving it wide open for German aggression to the east (in hope)?

At all events, the most reactionary and aggressive groups in the capitalist camp have shown unmistakably that they interpret the Bonn alliance as a signal to come into the open. Listen to them calling to each other across the frontiers—'In the opinion of a well-known editor, if the United States and Russia did not come to grips it must be for Germany to provide the necessary provocation' (*The Times* Special Correspondent, May 10): 'The

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peaceful unification of Germany in conditions of freedom cannot be achieved' (*Telegraph* editorial, May 19, our italics): 'Negotiations may become increasingly difficult from a psychological point of view' (French Foreign Minister Schuman at his press conference, May 30): 'This is Russia's real choice: she can have peace though not a peace that leaves her in possession of half Europe . . . Every Western Government is at any time prepared to negotiate and conclude a settlement with Russia which guarantees her peaceful and undisturbed existence within her state frontiers' (*Observer* editorial, June 1—with capitalism in possession of eastern European countries of course): 'Peace can be assured only if, in addition to the rights of man, the right to one's home is recognised' (Seebohm, Adenauer's Transport Minister, at the annual rally of Sudeten Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia, *The Times,* June 2.): the Yalta line 'must be displaced eastwards' in the near future (the Archduke Otto, at a country house party at which much else in the same strain was talked by retired generals, business men and diplomats, *Daily Worker,* June 7 and 9).

But equally clearly there are unmistakable signs of alarm and anger among the common people of Germany, France and Britain.

In Germany, the *Economist* noted (May 31), to celebrate signature of the Bonn alliance 'would have been very inappropriate in view of the attitude of the public': and indeed three months before the *Sunday Times* was already reporting (February 24) that the Socialists wanted elections and Adenauer was determined not to hold them because 'on the straight issue, "rearm or not rearm", the majority of West German electors would unquestionably vote "No" '. On May 18 the Social-Democrat leaders declared that the alliance would block the way to peaceful unity of Germany (*Daily Herald,* May 19): on May 21 Social Democrats joined with the Communists in the Bremen Assembly in a motion denouncing the alliance, the Social-Democratic president of the Upper House and chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Lower House decided to boycott its signature, and Schumacher, the Social-Democratic leader, declared: 'Any German who approves the peace contract no longer has the right to be a German. . . . This treaty means the rendering permanent of the division of Germany' (*The Times* and *Daily Herald,* May 23). These and similar declarations were not based on individual impulse. They reflected the loudly expressed feelings of the German working

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class—the strike of 120,000 workers at Munich, the demonstrations of 80,000 at Nuremberg and 40,000 in the Ruhr (all headed by Social Democrats), the protest demonstrations in the Berlin working class districts of Wedding (French zone) and Neukölln (American zone), and many similar events. It is against this rising volume of protest that the law transforming the works councils in Germany into Nazi 'Labour Front' organisations to enforce the employers' will in the factories must be seen to be rightly understood. If ever there were a case of the brazen violation of the will of a whole people for peace by tyrants bent upon war, it is the Bonn alliance.

This applies no less to France, as is shown by the giant demonstrations against Ridgway in Paris, and the innumerable strikes all over France against the arrest of the Communist leader Duclos, on May 27 and 28—both in the teeth of the most brutal and unrestrained violence by the police, and of a planned attack, on the most flimsy of pretexts, on the Communist Party, unquestioned leader of the French working class. As the British press itself has grudgingly admitted, there are in France 'difficulties in the way of finding a majority' for ratification of the Bonn agreements: in fact, 'such a majority must still be created' (*Manchester Guardian* Paris correspondent, May 26). He quotes Herriot's declaration at the Radical Party Congress: 'I am very anxious about rearmament of Germany', and his appeal to the U.S.A. 'not to draw us into a series of experiments such as I watched between the two wars': *The Times* correspondent adds that he was asking the Americans to negotiate, recalling that in a war, 'France, when you arrived, would be dead, covered with ruins and corpses': in the *Monde* of the same day we read that Daladier himself, Premier in 1939 and a violent anti-Soviet politician, protested at the Congress against 'rejecting with disdain the Soviet proposition of a Four-Power Conference'.

But this is precisely what the Western Allies did when they signed the Bonn agreements two days after receiving the latest Soviet Note. For, after replying briefly and quietly to the spate of charges made against it by the Western governments and their press, the Soviet Government once again proposed that, 'in spite of the differences with regard to the question of a peace treaty with Germany and also with regard to the question of the unification of Germany and the formation of an all-German government', joint discussions on these questions should be begun

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DESTINY

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from the series of lithographs by FRANS MASEREEL

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immediately, without dragging them out by further exchanges of Notes. And it specifically warned the Western Powers that, if they did confront the German people with accomplished facts by separate agreements, 'barriers at present insurmountable will be raised to the conclusion of a peace treaty and the unification of Germany'.

Many sections of the British working class have in recent weeks —trade union conferences, the Co-operative Party, the Co-operative Women's Guild, and innumerable local branches— passed resolutions demanding a halt to German rearmament, the opening of four-Power negotiations, the conclusion of a Peace Pact between the Powers. Nearly 60 Labour M.P.s have demanded four-Power talks and elections before any German rearmament. But the fact remains that the Bonn treaties have been signed—an international crime of the first magnitude—in defiance of these resolutions, of the French and the German peoples. At the present stage there is one way of nullifying them —by a giant campaign against their ratification. J. B. Figgins, general secretary of the N.U.R., put his finger on the spot in the *Railway Review* on June 6 when, under the heading 'Preserve Mankind', he wrote that, unless ratification of the Bonn treaties is refused, 'the possibility of explosion' will be intensified.

WHO IS QUAESTOR ?

We are not infrequently asked by appreciative readers: Who is Quaestor? But it is not our practice to make any statement concerning those of our contributors who write under a pen-name. Therefore the identity of the writer, or syndicate of writers, whose articles appear exclusively in *Labour Monthly* under the name of Quaestor must continue to be a strict editorial secret. However, it has come to our knowledge that a Lieut.-Colonel W. Byford-Jones, deputy editor of the Wolverhampton *Express and Star*, writes, and during the past 22 years has written, under the name of Quaestor books and articles which have had, we are given to understand, large sales in the Midlands. He is anxious for us to make it perfectly clear that he is not, and has no connection of any kind with, the Quaestor well-known to our readers for so many years.

We are happy to confirm this.

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A TRIAL IN JORDAN

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

ON the morning of 18th February, 1952, the Court buildings at Amman, capital of Jordan, were surrounded by soldiers and police. Inside the building every entrance was guarded and within the court soldiers stood to attention. The occasion was the 'trial' of Fuad Nassar (General Secretary of the illegal Communist Party) and four other fighters for peace.

When Fuad Nassar and his comrades entered the court all the people present stood up to greet them, and the prisoners sang songs of the peace partisans. The Judges ordered the police to stop the prisoners singing, but they finished their song in spite of the police. Fuad Nassar then made an impassioned protest to the court against their illegal detention, exposed the police terrorism during and since the arrests and demanded a fair and public trial, and declared:

> We are the voice of the masses of Arabic, Palestinian, and Jordanian people who are struggling and fighting for peace and liberty. No force in the world can close our mouths or silence this voice of the people.

The Judges asked the prisoners to state their occupations, and they answered with one voice:

> We are all fighters against imperialism and for peace and liberty for the people. That is our occupation.

The Attorney General then intervened and demanded that the trial be held in secret, claiming that the speech of Fuad Nassar if made public would be an insult to the Constitution of the kingdom. The lawyers protested against this proposal but to no effect, and the Judges instructed the police and the soldiers to eject everyone from the Court.

At this point Fuad Nassar declared:

> We refuse to recognise the right of this Court and demand that you send us back to prison and you can pass whatever judgment you like on us.

As this challenge was uttered, all the prisoners sang the song of the partisans of peace. The lawyers got together with the Judges to protest against the decision for a secret trial, and Fuad Nassar declared in Court:

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We ask for a public trial because our cause is a national and patriotic cause of the people. We communists are fighting to abolish this hateful regime in Jordan because it is not in the interests of the people. If the government claims that this is a just regime why are they afraid of five prisoners who are in their power? Even fascist governments have on occasions tried communists in public, but this government is worse even than the fascist government.

Another proof of this, said Nassar, is the fact that the Prime Minister had actually prevented deputies speaking in Parliament or writing in the newspapers.

The trial was adjourned for two days. When the prison official asked Fuad Nassar and his comrades to go to the Court they refused to do so and declared that they would not recognise the right of the Court to try them in secret. At that moment the soldiers then began to beat the prisoners and a pitched battle ensued. One hour later the prisoners were taken to the Court streaming with blood but still singing the song of the partisans of peace.

The lawyers again asked in Court for a public trial but the Judges refused and the lawyers left in protest. There were 28 lawyers who left the Court in protest, one of them an ex-Minister, another a former well-known Judge and others deputies and ex-deputies. After their departure it only took the Judges a few minutes to pronounce a sentence of 10 years on Fuad Nassar and six years on each of the other four. Apart from the 28 Jordanian lawyers who left the Court in protest, no less than 68 lawyers from Lebanon, and 38 lawyers from Syria had volunteered to defend them, but had been refused by the Jordanian Government the right to enter Jordan.

When the sentences were announced in Court all the prisoners joined together in shouting slogans of the peace and liberation movements, including such as: Long live the struggle of the Arabic, Palestinian and Jordanian people for peace, and national independence!

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THE ENGINEERS' FIGHT

H. HOWARTH*

IN the engineering workshops and shipyards throughout the country a fresh breeze is blowing. At times it appeared to reach gale force at the recent National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, where the spirit of the rank and file took charge. Every right-wing attitude displayed by the platform was swept aside. It had been blowing up since the unsatisfactory nature of the eleven shillings award of November 28, 1950, created a ferment in the industry that had not been witnessed for many years. There was the refusal to work piecework, with a series of disputes involving tens of thousands of engineers in the north—Manchester, Sheffield, Tyneside, including the giant factories of Metro-Vickers, Manchester, and Vickers, Elswick. In other districts the dispute took on the nature of a ban on overtime; and as with the piecework disputes, where the greatest unity existed (e.g. Barrow), victory was won. In the same period over 10,000 engineers were involved in strike struggles around issues such as victimisation of stewards—refusal by managements to honour agreements—cuts in piecework prices and redundancy. These disputes were notable for the stubbornness with which the workers held out and the wide support they received. In the main, the piecework battles were fought in the north; the strikes took place in the south, particularly in the London area.

The impact of Tory rule on living standards, the steady and remorseless drive for rearmament, is creating a critical and militant atmosphere in the workshop. The experiences of the last two years are beginning to create new ideas in the minds of the engineering workers; these are now being increasingly reflected in their actions. Through their shop stewards and branches (naturally the first to reflect the mood), a stream of resolutions is passing upwards from the factory floor to the District Committees, to the Executive Councils and the local M.P.s. (Of course, this movement had already begun during the General Election, when many works committees had organised *independently* to defeat their hatred enemy, the Tories; a flood of leaflets, hundreds of dinner-time meetings, scores of teams of helpers worked in the

*As many readers will know, Mr. Howarth is Chairman of the Sheffield District of the A.E.U.

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constituencies). The resolutions are of the most diverse character. They express graphically the anger and fighting spirit that is growing day by day. They express determination to fight for new wage demands. They range from condemnation of rearmament to opposition to the use of our boys in Korea and Malaya. They express a fighting determination to resist de-nationalisation and cuts in social services.

The Conference of Engineering and Shipbuilding Stewards on the 2nd March, in Sheffield, was timely, for it gave the workers an opportunity to lay down a broad policy for defence of living standards and put forward an alternative road to the one of crisis and ruin that we are now treading. This gathering of Stewards from every corner of Britain, straight from the factories and shipyards, expressed in no uncertain terms the mood of 250,000 men, women and youths they represented. The simple needs of the whole of the working class were expressed in the final paragraphs of the resolution on material shortages:

> Peace and trade with all countries and a substantial cut in arms by all great Powers is the only aim which coincides with the needs of engineering workers. This could be achieved by an independent policy free from the suicidal cold war carried through the Tories and the American millionaires. The Government will be forced to make these changes only if the entire weight of the Labour and Trade Union movement, particularly in the workshops, is brought to bear; only in this way will the Tory Government be speedily defeated.

Two events of great importance for the future struggles in engineering followed this conference. Firstly, the young engineers went into action for a £1 increase. With Scotland in the lead, Belfast, Manchester and Sheffield followed. The substantial increase ultimately won was a measure of the nervousness of the employers, who also conceded the right of the apprentices to a separate wage claim while enjoying the percentage increases of the adult wage claims. Secondly, the workers at Smiths, striking in defence of workers sacked because of unsold stocks, indicated that they will not meekly accept unemployment, and that the idea of employment as a fundamental human right is something worth fighting for.

Then came the all-important meeting of the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union on May 5. It demonstrated the increasing political maturity of its members. It reflected vividly the growing awareness among the rank and file of the need for a positive alternative to the disastrous policy of

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the right-wing leadership of the Labour and Trade Union movement. The inspiring solidarity amongst all sections of workers in the industry served emphatic notice to the platform that all the demands—and some were far-reaching—were to be fought for with determination and militancy. This was especially shown in the debate on the wages issue; again on the claim for equal pay, the apprentices' £1 increase, the gas workers' five-day week, etc. The resolutions, accordingly, were sharply worded: for example, on one issue 'a vigorous campaign' was called for; on another, 'in the event of failure to secure a satisfactory settlement *within one month*', the 'National Committee to be recalled forthwith'. Not least significant was the expression of 'profound dissatisfaction with the dilatory manner' of the negotiations for the replacement of the York Memorandum, and that three months' notice be served 'forthwith that we are no longer prepared to be a party' to it. On wider issues the mood of the rank and file was again sharply expressed in demanding that the next Labour Government 'nationalise, *without compensation,* those industries which have been denationalised by the Tory Government'; in its firm and practical housing proposals; and above all on the attitude to rearmament.

This began to be clear in the debate on the £2 wage claim; in addition, notice was served on the Government and the employers that any mass introduction of dilutees to speed rearmament would be resisted. But it was the resolution on rearmament that caused the greatest flutter in the dovecotes situated in Whitehall and Transport House. Here the committee, speaking for 800,000 workers, with tens of thousands engaged in making arms of all types, declared for:

(1) A Peace Pact between the five great Powers;
(2) An international discussion and agreement on a progressive reduction of all arms;
(3) Prohibition of atomic, germ and bacteriological warfare, and weapons, with full inspection and control;
(4) An enquiry into the wages of workers in countries that threaten Britain's trade, notably Japan and Germany.

This five-point resolution is to be moved by the A.E.U. at the September T.U.C., and will mark a new stage in the battle to free Britain from its lunatic orbit around Yankee imperialism. The breeze is blowing up to gale, the engineers are moving forward with increasing speed on the road to Peace and Socialism for Britain.

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WORLD SLUMP SIGNS?

RONALD FRANCIS

THE last year has seen a marked change in the economic situation in the capitalist world. In April there were 468,000 British workers unemployed and nearly 300,000 on short time. February figures of unemployment in Belgium (15 per cent), Denmark (16 per cent) and Eire (10 per cent) were all above the level of a year before, while the unemployed in America, Western Germany and Italy continue to be measured in millions. On America the 'experts' remain divided: you may choose either the *Manchester Guardian* with 'No American Slump', or *The Banker* which believes that there is 'more than a possibility' for 1953. What is certain is, that with 'the impact of defence production . . . at its peak now' (*Times Review of Industry*, May, 1952), the U.S. economic outlook is a source of anxiety.

The developing world crisis showed itself clearly in the course of capitalist production last year. In the second half of 1951, according to United Nations sources, the rate of increase in industrial production began to fall. This applied to every capitalist country with the single exception of India. In 'Marshall Europe' the rate of increase in industrial production rose rapidly during 1950 and fell even more rapidly last year. Figures quoted by the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, showing the percentage increases between corresponding quarters of 1949, 1950 and 1951, clearly reveal the rapid loss of industrial momentum in Western Europe:

	1950 over 1949	1951 over 1950
1st quarter	9.0	12.5
2nd quarter	8.8	13.0
3rd quarter	12.1	8.3
4th quarter	15.1	3.6

The output of United States industry, on the other hand, so far from rising during 1951, remained stationary, and by March this year (the latest available date) the index of industrial production was actually one per cent below the level of March, 1951. The pace of industrial production in Western Germany and Japan also slackened during last year, but since 1948 Japanese produc-

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tion has doubled, and West Germany's more than doubled. This is creating grave problems for those lesser satellites of the U.S.A. which feverishly struggle to maintain their foothold in world markets.

War preparations have wrought havoc with the economies of America's allies. The twelve months after the outbreak of the Korean war brought shortages and soaring prices as the great American monopolies and their government agencies sucked in vast quantities of vital raw materials for private and strategic stockpiles. At their peaks, wool and woodpulp (for paper) were nearly three times—and rubber over three-and-a-half times—their pre-Korean prices. Shortages hampered the industries of Western Europe, particularly those of Britain which are heavily dependent on imported supplies of raw materials. Moreover, the uprush of prices greatly increased the cost of imports and was principally responsible for the sharpest rise in the cost of living that the British people had experienced in ten years.

This speculative boom is now passing, and surpluses of raw materials are appearing in place of shortages. The *Economist* (June 7, 1952) writes:

> Now, most primary producers are confronted with the spectre of surpluses, although prices are generally still above their pre-Korean levels—prices of only four commodities, wool, Egyptian cotton, shellac and tallow, have fallen below it—and although output of most materials has increased only modestly.

In a desperate struggle to prevent a collapse of prices, international 'regulation' schemes have been put into operation, or are under discussion, for tea, sugar, wheat, rubber and cotton. These are the old raw-material cartels, some with new names, and all with a new boss—the U.S.A.

Rearmament only temporarily concealed the underlying economic trends in the capitalist world. Already in 1948 the phase of post-war reconstruction was passing and the familiar symptoms of capitalist crisis appeared. In the winter of 1948-49, American industrial production began to decline and unemployment rose. The U.S. monopolies' drive to solve their market problems at the expense of the lesser capitalist powers led to an acute dollar crisis in Western Europe with eventual devaluation of many currencies. The economic upturn in America coincided with the final liberation of China in 1949—an event which had a tremendous impact on the U.S. imperialists. From then on the militarisation of the U.S. economy began in earnest.

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Rearmament short of war has failed, and must necessarily fail to solve the market problem for the capitalist world. The commodity boom which followed the attack in Korea drove up the cost of living in Britain and widened the gap between wages and prices. This, coupled with the burden imposed on the working-class by two rearmament budgets has sharply reduced the purchasing power of the British people. Similar developments are taking place elsewhere in Western Europe and also in Australia.

Reductions in living standards reflect themselves in flagging retail sales. It is well known that declining sales in Britain have led to unemployment and reduced output in the clothing, textiles, furniture and boot and shoe industries. British rayon production, for example, has now fallen to the 1947 level. Overproduction of many consumer goods in a shrinking market is not confined to Britain. The *Financial Times* (January 25, 1952) writes that 'the textile recession is not confined to Britain, nor to Europe, but is world-wide, affecting even the prosperous American industry'. And, they might have added, Japanese industry also.

The situation is deteriorating as country after country imposes restrictions on imports. Thrown into a critical situation by the rise and collapse of the commodity boom, capitalist countries are desperately endeavouring to correct their gaping deficits in international trade by cutting imports. The savage import cuts imposed by the Australian Tory government are a special blow to Britain's motor car industry. Last year Australia took over one-quarter of Britain's car exports, and, as the *Economist* (June 7, 1952) remarks:

> it is not easy to be confident that the markets outside the sterling area . . . can be induced to take any more cars than they did last year.

That, if anything, errs on the side of optimism.

International trade among the countries of the capitalist 'West' presents a sorry picture. The April figures for Britain's overseas trade show a drop of one-third in the export of cotton goods as compared with April, 1951, and a halving of manufactured woollen exports over the same period. Total exports to Australia fell to £18½ million in April compared with a monthly average of £34½ million in the first quarter of the year. 'Nevertheless', says the *Economist* (May 27, 1952) 'trade with Australia will worsen in the next few months'.

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The total volume of exports from Europe, according to United Nations statistics, rose by only 12 per cent last year. This is roughly half the average rate of increase achieved in the post-war period, and only half the rate at which U.S. and Canadian exports expanded last year. In 1951 the U.S.A. exported over $4,000 million more goods than she imported so that by the winter of 1951-52 the countries of 'Marshallised' Europe were grappling desperately with a fresh 'dollar crisis'.

The struggle for markets is rising to a feverish pitch. Twisting and turning in an endeavour to stop the drain on their gold and dollar reserves, the lesser imperialist powers find themselves pinned down by American strategy. Firstly, under threat of withdrawal of the dollar 'aid' which props up the tottering capitalist governments of Western Europe, the lesser powers are barred from trading with the stable economies of the U.S.S.R., China and Eastern Europe. Secondly, the exports of the Western satellites are threatened by the Trojan horses in their midst—Western Germany and Japan. These two countries, financed and guided by the giant monopolies of the U.S.A., are now launching their exports into those narrow markets left to the West by American strategy. Diverted from their natural markets in Eastern Europe and China the industries of West Germany and Japan are turning their full force towards the export markets of Britain, Belgium, and France. The *Financial Times* (January 25, 1952) sums up the position:—

> One of the biggest stimulants to expansion has been and continues to be the American encouragement for Japanese industry . . . With the former main markets in the Far East irrevocably written off, Japanese textiles and other exports must seek other outlets.

And again (May 26, 1952):—

> British manufacturers of heavy commercial vehicles and diesel engines, two of Britain's best long-term exports, are losing important foreign orders at a crucial period, mainly to Germany.

It is significant that total British exports to Latin America last year rose by only six per cent, whereas West German exports to that area increased by no less than 142 per cent.

Unless present policies are reversed, the economic prospects for Britain are ruinous. Cuts in real wages are destroying the home market for consumer goods, while the fall in raw material prices is reducing the purchasing power of the colonial peoples, and is leading to import restrictions on all sides. The struggle

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for export markets, leads in some cases to cut-throat competition, in other cases to cartel agreements between the great international monopolies designed to strangle trade and maintain profit.

There is no doubt that the crisis is widening and deepening, and it would be a mistake to imagine it will be confined to raw materials and consumer goods. There are strong indications that in coal and steel production may soon overrun demand. Sagging industrial production means less demand for coal, and already excessive coal stocks have made their appearance in Lancashire and Belgium. In steel the situation is further advanced. Belgian, German, French and Japanese export prices for steel are falling. In the U.S.A., despite the steel strike, two steel corporations have shelved their plans for further expansion owing to a weakening market and 'uncertainties' about the future. The American magazine, *Iron Age* (May 1, 1952) offers no illusion of an easy market:—

> A return to a competitive market in steel may touch off one of the bitterest scrambles for business in the history of the industry.

Nor will the machine and shipbuilding industries escape unscathed if present trends continue. Textile machinery sales will suffer with the depression in textiles, and the machine tool industry will soon have completed deliveries under the rearmament programme. In America anxious voices were raised over the virtual disappearance of foreign orders for machine tools early this year. Shipbuilding boasts of a long order book, but freight rates are falling and further declines may lead to cancellation of orders for new ships.

The developing crisis, bringing with it the threat of new wars, can only be met by reversing present policies. The threat to Britain is immediate and grave. Declining purchasing power at home and contracting markets abroad are dealing heavy blows to Britain's economy, yet the alternatives stand as a challenge to the Labour movement and to all those who wish to see Britain prosperous and independent. In this situation the International Economic Conference at Moscow was of the utmost importance. It showed, and is still revealing in concrete fashion, what can be done to lay the basis of an expanding trade, mutually beneficial to the trading nations. Such trade is an economic necessity to Britain, for without it her great factories and shipyards stand idle and her skilled workers are without employment.

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AVICENNA

NICHOLAS HANNAFORD

IN Asia and in Africa the democratic vanguard of the liberation struggle is reviving the past history and culture of their peoples, not in opposition to Western culture, but as part of the common heritage of human society. These cultural traditions are being brought to life in the struggle for independence and progress. Of the past contributions of the now subject peoples to the civilisation of Western Europe, none was more important or more direct than the contribution of the Arabs.

The rôle of the Arabs in the history of civilisation is a subject on which schools in the Western world provide little more than some vague and scattered notions. Outside a restricted circle of scholars, specialists and would-be diplomats, all that the average student is taught about the history of the Arabs is an outline of the early Islamic conquests (more often than not classified once and for all among the barbarian invasions), supplemented by their military feats and defeats, after a gap of some centuries, during the Crusades. Another long gap follows, leading to contemporary times when the Arab peoples are represented as the inhabitants of a chaotic part of the world, important because of the strategic significance, or the oil, or the cotton, of their countries, but otherwise backward, uneducated, uncivilised.

Yet for about four centuries Arab civilisation played a predominant rôle in the history of the world. At a definite stage of their economic development, when they were far in advance of Europe, they produced and passed on a rich fund of learning and experience which served as a stepping stone for the Europeans at the end of their dark ages. Light came from the East.

The official disregard of this fact, and the common lack of interest in this most important chapter of history are characteristic of the moral and intellectual outlook of the bourgeoisie. There is persistent cackle about the heritage of Greece and Rome. But about the Arabs who so largely transmitted it to Western Europe, there is persistent and lingering silence. Why? Because in order to have greater freedom to loot and oppress, what better justification than the 'inferiority' of the subjected peoples? Technical progress and political development were therefore represented as the exclusive attributes of the white man, ignorance

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and political backwardness those of the conquered peoples. 'East is East and West is West' : exclusivism and division became the ideological justification of a policy of aggression and exploitation.

It is this same fallacious ideology that the ruling class of the imperialist states is using today, when an ever-increasing number of oppressed peoples are fighting for their national liberation. How much harder it would have made the task of the imperialists everywhere if the common soldiers in their aggressive armies had the notion that the Tunisians, Egyptians, Malayans, Koreans whom they are sent to put down with tanks and napalm bombs were capable of achieving the same degree of civilisation as themselves, given the same chance. How much more convenient to arm them in the name of 'civilisation' against 'the gooks', 'the bandits', 'the rioting mobs' !

Writing on the factors that made possible the Renaissance in Europe, 'the greatest progressive revolution that mankind had so far experienced', Engels notes that

> . . . a cheerful spirit of free thought taken over from the Arabs and nourished by the newly-discovered Greek philosophy, took root more and more and prepared the way for the materialism of the eighteenth century. (*Dialectics of Nature*)

Arab culture was the product of a flourishing civilisation which was developed between the 8th and 11th centuries, i.e. from the end of the Arab conquests to the decline of the Caliphate. The Arab empire at its peak stretched from the borders of China to Spain on the shores of the Atlantic, and comprised lands of old cultural traditions, like Persia, Syria and Egypt, and peoples of divers religions: Moslems, Jews, Zoroastrians. Arab culture draws from all these sources, which in time permeated each other to give rise to a new culture expressing itself in the Arabic language and founded on the spirit of religious tolerance and intellectual progress which marked the prime age of the Abbasid Empire. Having established a centralised administration and peaceful relations with their neighbours, they brought far-reaching changes in the economic life of their Empire. Apart from the expansion of agriculture through irrigation works and through a more equitable system of land taxes, they developed industry and, above all, trade between the Far East and the Mediterranean. Moslem merchants travelled to Africa, India, the East Indies, China, Russia, and even established trading relations with Scandinavia.

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This golden age of the Abbasids reached its climax in the 9th century. It was the dynamic age of a merchant society seeking to enlarge its geographic and intellectual horizons. It was an age of awakening and learning, of assimilation of Greek philosophy and science. Princes tolerated, often patronised, scientific research and theological speculation. They sent their learned men to all centres of learning in the Empire, and even to India and Byzantium, in search of manuscripts. Translations were encouraged to the utmost. The impact of Greek thought stimulated the rationalist outlook of the traders, travellers and men of science. In a society dominated, like the Muslim State, by a theology, religion itself came to bear the influence of rationalism. The controversy between reason and revelation with which students of medieval Europe are familiar, was raging in the Muslim world of the 9th century.

During this period of assimilation, Aristotle, Plato, Ptolemy, Euclid, Archimedes, Hippocrates, Galen, were translated into Arabic. Special schools and libraries grew up, the most famous of which was the 'House of Wisdom' (Bait al Hikma) founded by the Caliph Maamun (813-833). Translations were followed by commentaries and original speculation on philosophical and scientific matters. The works of the Arab thinkers of this age were later translated into Latin and served as a link between ancient and modern civilisation.

Later, when economic and political decline had reduced the Abbasid court of Baghdad to a shadow of its past grandeur, the centres of learning were kept alive by local ruling dynasties. In Central Asia, Khurasan (for a long time part of Persia) was one such principality. It was in Khurasan that Abu Ali Al Husain Ibn Abdallah Ibn Sina, known in Europe as Avicenna, was born in the year 370 of the Muslim calendar, 1,001 years ago. Avicenna was a typical product of Arab civilisation in that he summed up and enriched the learning of his age, and that he provided one of the channels through which Europe, at the end of the dark ages, gained its contact with earlier civilisations.

Persia (including Khurasan) had a long tradition of learning. Under the Sasanid dynasty, the old school of Jundishapur had received a great stimulus from the penetration of Greek culture in the 5th century, when, as a result of the intolerance of the

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Byzantine State, Nestorian scholars fled from their school at Edessa and sought refuge in Persian territory. At the time of the Arab conquest of Persia (7th century A.D.) the school of Jundishapur was at the height of its glory. Greek and Oriental learning had converged there.

Avicenna found the material ready. His work was that of an encyclopaedist, but, apart from compiling and commenting, he enriched the available material with his observations and experience. Like the great thinkers of the European Renaissance, Avicenna was a universal man. His genius touched all the fields of knowledge of his time: medicine, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, physics, alchemy, geology, music, poetry.

Avicenna was educated at Bukhara, then the seat of the ruling house of Khurasan. At an early age he learned the Koran, Arabic literature, geometry, canon law, Greek philosophy and logic. Soon surpassing his masters, he worked alone on physics, mathematics and medicine. At 18, he cured the Samanid Sultan of a serious illness. As a reward, the latter opened to him his magnificent library, which included translations of Greek works. At 21 he wrote his first book, Al Majmu (a compendium of philosophy). From Bukhara, he travelled to several principalities, at one becoming the court physician, at another combining this post with that of Vizir, or Prime Minister. Persecuted by his political opponents, he sought refuge in Ispahan, where he died in 1037 A.D.

Avicenna's life was one of amazing activity and productivity. Politician and physician, he never stopped studying and writing. Busy with political matters all day, he wrote at night. Imprisoned by his political opponents, he used his relative tranquillity to write several books on medicine and philosophy. Accompanying the prince on his travels, he worked on horseback. His contemporary biographer describes his nightly gatherings. His books were discussed as they were being written. As a page was finished, it was read aloud by one of the guests and discussed. Hence a quantity of small works: epistles, treatises, poems, apart from his major works, the most important of which are his Canon of Medicine (Al Kanum Fil Tibb) and Al Shifa (Recovery). The latter, in 18 volumes, includes logic, philosophy, psychology, physics, natural sciences, based on Aristotelian and neo-platonist principles.

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His Canon of Medicine was an attempt to systematise all the medical writings of the world up to his time. It is specially important because of Avicenna's personal additions to this knowledge: studying natural science, he discredited alchemy by denying the possibility of transmutation of the metals. Studying medicine, he recognised, in opposition to the prevalent superstitions, that certain mental diseases are due to abnormality of certain parts of the brain. Ahead of his time, he knew that certain diseases were spread by the soil and by drinking water.

Usually the Renaissance in Europe is dated from the fall of Byzantium to the Turks in 1453. But the intellectual conditions which made the Renaissance possible go back to the works of the Arab thinkers who kept ancient culture, and especially Greek culture, alive. Avicenna's rôle in this field was of utmost importance. Early in the 12th century the Archbishop of Toledo founded a college of translators where Arabic works, especially Avicenna's works, were translated into Latin. These created a wide interest in the centres of learning, so great that the Church was alarmed. In 1210, and again in 1215, the study of Aristotle and his commentators was officially banned by the Church authorities. Studies went on, nevertheless. The study of Avicenna's commentaries on Aristotle reached its climax in the 13th century. Among many notable names, three must be mentioned: Albertus Magnus; Roger Bacon, who received his scientific and philosophical training from the study of Arab writers; and St. Thomas Aquinas, who studied at the university of Naples, where the works of Avicenna and other Arab writers were translated into Latin and Hebrew.

Avicenna's influence in the field of European medicine lasted even longer. Medieval universities, and especially the University of Montpellier, a centre of medical studies, used Arabic authorities on medicine. Lectures on the Canon of Avicenna were given there down to the beginning of the 17th century.

Arab learning in the spirit of enquiry and progress was stopped by foreign invasions: Mongol, Turkish, European, which for centuries now have stifled its creative possibilities by depriving the Arab peoples of economic, political and intellectual freedom. The triumph of the national liberation struggle in the Arab countries will recreate the conditions in which the Arab peoples will again be able to contribute their share to the progress of mankind.

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FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

ALL-INDIAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS

The Seventh Annual Session of the All-Indian Trade Union Congress was held at Delhi on March 12 and 13. The following are some of the chief resolutions passed by the Congress:—

(1) This Congress extends its cordial welcome and greetings of Indian workers to Mr. S. Saklatvala, M.P., and takes this opportunity of thanking him publicly for his valiant fight in the cause of millions of Indian workers and peasants, and thanks the electors of North Battersea for returning him to Parliament for the purpose of carrying on a united fight for British and Indian workers.

(2) (a) This Congress puts on record its whole-hearted approval of the magnificent advance made by the people of China towards the attainment of national freedom and in pursuit of the principle of self-determination. The Congress warmly appreciates the valuable work that has been done by the trade unions and peasants' organisations which, under the leadership of Kuomintang, have frustrated the aggressive designs of the united imperialistic powers. The Congress, while pledging its full support to the movement of liberation in China, expresses its firm conviction that the cause of Indian Nationalism and the struggle of the working classes against exploitation should profit from the example of solidarity of the Nationalist movement and the workers and peasants' organisations as set by China.

(b) This Congress vehemently protests against the action of the Indian Government in furthering the aims of imperialism by sending Indian troops to China, and calls upon the Government of India to recall all such troops.

(3) This Congress is of opinion that legislation shall immediately be passed providing for all workers working in factories, mines, tea, coffee and rubber plantations, and in all other organised trades and industries:—

(a) Adult franchise. (b) An eight-hour day. (c) Machinery for fixing minimum wages. (d) Sickness and unemployment insurance. (e) Old-age pensions and pensions for widows and orphans. (f) Maternity benefits. (g) Weekly payment of wages.

(4) This Congress reaffirms its old resolution protesting against the system of fines prevailing in industrial and commercial firms and railways, and requests the Government of India to pass legislation making illegal all agreements between the employers and the employed enabling the employers to make deductions on account of fines.

(5) This Congress views with approval the efforts which have been made by the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee to bring about unity between the International Federation of Trade Unions and Red International of Labour Unions, and expresses a hope that the international unity will soon be achieved, and regrets its inability to consider joining the international movement till such unity is achieved.

From *The World of Labour*, July, 1927.

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Communication

TELENGANA

THE heroic struggle of the peasants of Telengana, Hyderabad State, and its sequels in many trials before the courts, has been the subject of a number of articles in *Labour Monthly* (*Oppression in India*, July, 1950; *A Telengana Prisoner Writes*, May, 1951). It may be of interest to record the present position.

There are still 300 cases of capital charges pending in the District Courts in the Nalgonda Area, and six cases before the Sessions Court at Hyderabad. Three more cases, involving 40 accused, are pending at Warangal. On appeal to the High Court at Hyderabad there are eight capital and four non-capital appeals from Nalgonda, and from Warangal two capital appeals involving nine accused, and two non-capital appeals involving eight. Two capital appeals are pending in the Supreme Court of India.

In addition to all these cases, there are 375 'detenus' (persons detained without charge or trial) in Hyderabad State, many of whom need legal aid to put a stop to illegal beatings and torture—and even to unexplained 'disappearance', a particularly disquieting occurrence which is found from time to time.

The Telengana Defence Committee of Bombay, which for long did splendid work in providing legal aid for the accused peasants, and in particular was responsible for carrying the cases of 'the twelve' to the Supreme Court in December, 1950, and February, 1951, found itself unable to continue after 1951. The People's Defence Committee has, however, taken over much of the work in Nalgonda District, including appeals to the High Court of Hyderabad and thence to the Supreme Court; and Mr. Hamid Usmani and other lawyers under his guidance are dealing with those in Warangal and with appeals to the High Court from Warangal.

One encouraging feature of the defence work being carried on at present is the high proportion of acquittals secured. In one series of eight trials in Warangal, all the 58 accused were acquitted; and in three appeals from other Warangal cases to the High Court, involving eight appellants, two were acquitted, and all the rest had their sentences reduced—four death sentences being reduced to life imprisonment.

One other encouraging feature is that the peasants of Telengana are represented in the new Indian Parliament by one of themselves, who—with the prestige of having been elected with more votes than any other member in all India—can raise their problems directly.

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Book Reviews

CHARTISM

Ernest Jones—Chartist, by John Saville. (284 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *25s.*)

ERNEST JONES was truly a remarkable man; remarkable in the sense that he—a man from what could be called the upper-classes — became such a leader of such a gigantic movement; remarkable in that he saw with such clarity the irresistible power of the organised working class, and remarkable in the courage, tenacity and determination he displayed through setbacks enough to break any heart. Three years after having served two years of inhuman imprisonment, and after bitter disappointments in the movement, he could still say in an oration at the graveside of Ben Rushton, a Chartist, at Halifax:

> We meet today at a burial and a birth—the burial of a noble patriot is the resurrection of a glorious principle. The foundation stones of liberty are the graves of the just; the lives of the departed are the landmarks of the living, the memories of the past are the beacon of the future.

I have not read a complete biography of Ernest Jones. I do not know if one has been written. This collection of speeches and writings gives us an intriguing glimpse of the rich biography which would be of great value to us today, when it should come to be written. Chartism, with Ernest Jones at its centre, was much more than a years-long fight for the right to vote. It was a fight for bread, for work, for wages, shorter hours, against child slavery, for freedom, for education, for human decency, for peace among the nations, and for international working-class solidarity. All this and more recur time and time again through the speeches and writings in this collection. The realisation of the Charter was to be the means whereby all these further reforms could be achieved. Today we might have said: 'Fight for bread, work, wages, and shorter hours, etc., at once, and while you press the demands for the fullest franchise keep on hitting the exploiters in mine and mill, the sooner to win the Charter.' But we would be being wise after one hundred years. Ernest Jones did understand the significance of all-embracing working-class action. From his newspaper *The People's Paper*, he championed the struggles of the cotton workers of Preston, and pointed to the significance of help being given to them by the cotton workers of Burnley, and other towns. He went further, when he showed the significance of solidarity between the cotton workers of Preston and the colliers of Wigan. He pointed out that the workers should never limit their fight to the area that the employer has chosen, but should at once seek to widen the numbers of workers involved, seek financial help from other trades, build national industrial organisation, and he even advocated forms of organisation which were later to become our present trades councils. With startling clarity he goes to the root of questions which are so much garbled or clothed in academic sophistry today by so many liberal intellectuals who these days jump on the labour bandwagon, almost without dignity. If the Lib.-Labs. took the trouble to read something of men like Jones they would find that many of the shibboleths they utter today were uttered by the exploiters of one hundred years ago.

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What does Jones say of that blessed word Freedom? It is to have enough to eat, to have a decent home, to enjoy social opportunity, to have no fear of tomorrow, of war, or old age. In short, economic Freedom. Freedom without these things is just a word used by deceivers. In other words, it is impossible *not* to have Freedom, where the means of production have been taken from the exploiters, and where economic progress and prosperity are assured.

In 1846 Ernest Jones made his declaration in an open letter in which he stated: 'I cannot support a system by which the poor are robbed of their labour for the benefit of the rich, and *slaves are still further insulted by being told that they are free.*' How tory, liberal and labour reactionary keep telling us how free we are in Britain today —free to criticise the Government, even though the arms pile up—free to criticise Capitalism, even though profits keep rising—free to strike, even though we go hungry, and are tools of Moscow if we do—in fact free to run round the Capitalist citadel until we are blue in the face, but we must never enter. For then we should travel the Russian road, and lose our freedom—freedom to run round the citadel. In a hundred years the hypocrisy has not changed. No wonder they have tried to bury the story of Chartism.

But we have made progress since Chartist days, both in welfare, wages and freedom. And every bit of it has been torn from the reluctant grasp of the exploiters. The struggles of the Chartists laid the foundation for what success the labour movement has achieved since. And a proper study of Chartism sets the seal on the words of Engels that the British workers may be slow to move, but once they do then there is nothing that can stop them. Today, to hold back the invincible logic of socialism, capitalism is called Freedom, and socialism Totalitarianism — and even this would not be enough to hold the workers if only tories said it, but it is today the language of labour leaders, too.

Scientific socialism has given us a guide today which men like Jones did not possess, but the latter lacked nothing in ability to nail every lie and deceit in his day. 'And a system which makes paupers can never cure pauperism,' he states. Although apparently having some belief in religion, he certainly had none in religion's earthly representatives. He enjoins the workers, to tell the priests, that 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, that we can make a heaven of *this* earth which will much smooth the way in searching for another'.

No wonder the Government of 1848 finally put Ernest Jones under lock and key, though they held out hope for him if he would forswear his principles, which he proudly scorned. His political insight was acute to a remarkable extent. The middle-class politicians, liberals, etc., appealed to the Chartists not to put forward candidates in constituencies where 'they might let a tory slip in'. Where have we heard this phrase in recent years? Jones answered trenchantly: 'Away with your shams and pseudo-liberals who would stand in the way of your contesting a borough, and, with their little bit of Chartism, try to keep out the Charter.' We could well paraphrase this today. 'Away with your sham Lib.-Labs. who with

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their meagre socialist phrases would keep out socialism.'

It is of especial interest to read of the multifarious activities of the leading Chartists with foreign refugees, of the enthusiastic championing of the struggles of other oppressed nations. With great force Ernest Jones wrote and spoke on behalf of Irish Freedom, on behalf of the Poles struggling against Russian Tsardom. Of greatest interest was his courageous stand at the time of the Indian Mutiny, when he boldly took up cudgels on behalf of India while all Britain was being stirred up into a campaign of hatred against Sepoyism. To condemn one's own Government when it oppresses another nation, and when such oppression has led to uprising, is a proof of the calibre of a political leader.

It is not surprising that we find Ernest Jones in contact with Marx and Engels in Britain during the fifties of last century, and when Chartism was declining, but when Jones was making desperate efforts to keep the spirit of Chartism alive. This book contains a collection of letters on Jones, which had passed between Marx and Engels over many years. They are very interesting and instructive, and illustrate how a man like Jones, with such marvellous energy and courage and brilliance, could yet fail to become a Marxist himself. But Ernest Jones, in spite of his class origins, in spite of the Radicalism he associated with towards the end of his life, was basically with the workers. Engels wrote when Jones died, at the early age of fifty, 'he was the only educated Englishman among the politicians who was, at bottom, entirely on our side'.

J. HAMMOND.

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Book Reviews

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MIDDLE AGES

English Society in the Early Middle Ages, by D. M. Stenton (Volume Three of the Pelican History of England, 288 pp. 2s. 6d.)

JUST criticisms have been made of the traditional political histories which simply recounted the doings of the governments and ruling classes of society, concentrating on wars, diplomacy and political events. Such histories ignored the economic life of society, the relations of classes and the lives of the common people. Consequently they were of little use as aids to the understanding of the development of society, still less as a guide to action in contemporary society. They were not, of course, intended to be.

The criticism of old-fashioned political history has made itself felt, and professional historians nowadays direct their attention to economic and social as well as to political phenomena. The results, for the student of history anxious to apply lessons from this most important of the social sciences to the problems of the Labour movement, are all too often little better than before. This work by Lady Stenton is an excellent object lesson. It is part of a series which may be presumed to be directed to a non-specialist body of readers. The author is a professional historian of distinction who has made her name by editing important original sources. She consciously aims at writing a book which will give the reader an insight into social life of all classes as well as the day-to-day activity of the state between the Norman Conquest and the end of the thirteenth century. But in spite of her considerable knowledge, the book has great defects as a contribution towards the understanding of the past.

The most important of these defects is that political issues, the clash of classes and of rival interests, are almost entirely omitted. This was the era which saw the struggle culminating in the granting of Magna Carta (in 1215), the conflict between the King of England and the baronial party led by Simon de Montfort (1258-65), the attacks on the independence of the Welsh and Scottish peoples, not to speak of an increasing tempo of agrarian revolt. These are only mentioned in passing. Because the political manifestations of the contradictions inherent in English feudal society are ignored, most of the matters which are dealt with lose half their significance. However detailed and accurate the description of state institutions, and however comprehensive the account of the barons and knights of England, a historian is not justified in neglecting the serious and continual clash of interests involved (to quote but one example) in the extensions of central state power at the expense of the interests of some sections of the ruling class.

Apart from this omission of fundamental political issues, there is a curious lack of balance in the presentation of social and economic matters. The work is on the whole deficient on the economic side. Agriculture, industry and commerce are not dealt with as vital practical

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Readers of Labour Monthly interested in the formation of a monthly Discussion Group, who reside in West Norwood and Upper Norwood, should get in touch with Frank Grimble, 144a, Church Road, Upper Norwood, London, S.E.19.

(Next meeting, Wednesday, July 16, 8 p.m., in the Upper Norwood Community Centre, Bedwardine Road, off Central Hill. S.E.19.)

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activities with a whole number of technical and economic aspects. They are dealt with sketchily as far as the allotment of space is concerned. Furthermore, they are approached from a largely institutional angle. Town life for instance is described in terms of laws and organisations set up to control the lives of the burgesses. The economic basis of guild organisation hardly has a place. Another curious element of unbalance results from an over-emphasis of the trivial. Unnecessary details are quoted *in extenso* from contemporary documents, presumably in an attempt to give concreteness to the things described. But this is frequently overdone, as for instance a tedious enumeration of the allowances of members of the King's household in the twelfth century.

Another important criticism of the book is that it is written as if England existed in a vacuum. The average uninformed reader may well believe, after reading the book, that the institutions of English feudal society were typical, whereas in fact there were numerous significant differences from French, German and Italian feudalism. It may be objected that since this is a history of England, such criticism is unfair. But the good historian must always be aware of the interconnection of things. Therefore, since during the greater part of the period covered, England was part of a political system which included much of France, was saddled with a foreign ruling class, and was closely linked with Northern Europe as far as commerce is concerned, the insular approach results in a serious distortion of reality.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this work does not represent an advance in the writing of popular history. In many respects the level of technical competence is high, at any rate on the side of legal and institutional history. But history still remains departmentalised, and the significant and the trivial are not distinguished.

RODNEY HILTON.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

Noel Buxton. Mosa Anderson. Allen and Unwin. 180 pp. 16s.

The Badgers. Leonid Leonov. Hutchinsons. 336 pp. 12s. 6d.

New Fabian Essays. Editor: R. H. S. Crossman. Turnstile Press. 216 pp. 15s.

The Choice Before South Africa. E. S. Sachs. Turnstile Press. 220 pp. 15s.

British Trade Unionism. Allen Hutt. Lawrence and Wishart. 200 pp. 7s. 6d.

A Lantern for Jeremy. V. J. Jerome. Masses and Mainstream, New York; Collet's London. 288 pp. 20s.

Power Without Glory. Frank J. Hardy. Realist Printing Co., Melbourne; Collet's London. 670 pp. 9s. 6d.

How Music Expresses Ideas. S. Finkelstein. Lawrence and Wishart. 128 pp. 9s. 6d.

The Hidden History of the Korean War. I. F. Stone. Turnstile Press. 364 pp. 21s.

Diaries 1912—24. Beatrice Webb. Longmans, Green. 272 pp. 24s.

Problems of Nationalised Industry. Sir A. Salter, G. D. H. Cole, W. A. Lewis, E. Davies, S. Florence, G. Walker, A. Albu. Allen and Unwin. 392 pp. 25s.

Articles and Pamphlets. Maxim Gorky. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow; Collet's, London. 408 pp. 6s. 6d.

The Dilemma of South Africa. John Hatch. Dobson. 256 pp. 18s.

PAMPHLETS

The Struggle for a Free Press. E. P. Thompson. People's Press. 22 pp. 6d.

Britain's Colour Bar in Africa. Julius Lewin. Union of Democratic Control. 16 pp. 1s.

Britain Needs Peace with Russia. Pat Sloan. British Friendship Society. 14 pp. 4d.

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not permitted for our splendid magazine to enter this camp and therefore my comrades and I have decided to put my present subscription at your disposal for a useful employ of it. For all, I thank you'. I feel it will please these brave anti-fascists to think that from their prison they are able to help British trade unionism in the person of our veteran friend.

'I FELT LIKE CHOKING'

Recent issues have called out some reminiscences of the past. An old age pensioner writes of the 'Tonypandy stoppage and the dastardly actions of the imported police' which he witnessed forty years ago. Another veteran recalls the General Strike, 'when I had my fill of picketing, running to and fro on my bike from Mill Hill to where the *British Worker* was printed. I still feel the guns of Churchill staring at me and see the traitors slinking into the factory. I felt like bursting or choking sometimes, especially when the then leaders caved in'.

HONOURS

Our May fund total does not look very strong; readers daily feel the pinch more nearly. Those who suffer the full weight are those who, after a lifetime of hard work, should now be free to enjoy an honourable rest without money troubles. Some day in Britain we will have 'Honours Lists' filled with names of those who now only figure in the roll of Old Age Pensioners. From Middlesex: 'Since retiring I have had to cut down on subs'. From Wiltshire: 'I find I would rather suffer physical than mental starvation, so here go my dinners to renew a sub. for half a year'. From Hertfordshire: 'I do enjoy reading it each month; but having been in hospital 12 months my O.A.P. is downrated to 5s. so am not very flush'. A turn of illness or unemployment, too, weighs heavily. From a London regular: 'Laid up with an injury to my arm, but hope soon to get back to fitness and a job, when I shall get a kick out of being able to send a donation again'. From Lancashire: 'As I am unemployed and very short of cash, I can only help with these Co-op. checks, representing essential purchases. All the best in the struggle'. And to you, and to you all.

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